ethos

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Brer Rabbit: Brother Race

Elaine L. Finlay, '71

In the works of Sir Roger L'Estrange: "We are all like children and prefer the pill of moral teaching sweetened with the pleasure of the tale." If used in a psychologist's word-association test, the word "rabbit" would connote various ideas to different people. To a child it might suggest Bugs Bunny; to a fighter, a "rabbit punch;" to an artist, Durer's life-like "The Young Hare;" to a key-holder at the Club, the cuddly Bunnies who serve drinks. And then for me there is the association "Brer Rabbit," the character immortalized by J. C. Harris, rather than the molasses your mother uses in her homemade cookies.

The Uncle Remus stories were genuine Negro folk-lore presented and passed down orally from generation to generation before the Civil War. Joel Chandler Harris was the first to give them literary form, thus preserving them in print for future readers after the war.

In dealing with the Brer Rabbit stories, three problems arise: their origin, their classification, and their importance. As yet there is no conclusive answer to any one of these problems. Common to the folk tales of Asia, Africa, and North America, the rabbit is a hero. In the Buddhist religion of India, the rabbit is a deity, recorded as such in the *jatakas* or birthstories of Buddha.

During one of Buddha's rebirths, he was born among the hare-kind. Of all the animals in the community of gods, the hare was the wisest, and preached the truth to his companions. Quoted from another *jataka* is the hare-in-the-moon myth: "The sign of the hare in the moon will last a whole *kalpa*" (as long as the world endures).

In North America, the rabbit is slightly removed from the role of a deity to that of a semi-divine ancestor. Among the Algonquins, he was the fruitful Ancestral Hare from whom all tribes originated. Known also as *Michabo,* the Great White Hare, he functioned like Hiawatha in teaching his people the arts of peace.

In African folklore he is a rogue-hero with ungod-like vices and human frailties; he is lazy, greedy, unscrupulous, deceitful, boastful, prankish, sometimes even devilish, but always resourceful.

The following examples of the hare in the moon and the tarbaby can be seen readily in the American Negro tales "Brer Rabbit Has Trouble with the Moon" and "The Wonderful Tar-baby Story." The element which the Thompson River Indian tale has in common with the others is the word "hare." As this legend has it, the Moon was a white-faced Indian who invited the stars to a feast in his lodge. The Prince, the Moon, sent his sister, the Hare, to fetch some water. Upon her return, the Hare found no room to sit down. In jest, the brother bade her sit on his face. "If the Moon had not joked thus, he would now be much brighter, for his sister may still be seen sitting on his face, diminishing his brightness."

Most directly related to the Brer Rabbit tale is the Hottentot version of the same story. Both account for the darker regions of the moon and the medical defect termed the "hare-lip." As Uncle Remus relates the episode, "Unc" moon has not been feeling well and badly needs a rest. But someone must

inform Mr. Man so that he will not worry. Brer Rabbit volunteers to deliver the moon's explicit message that he is going on a vacation but that he will return. Either the rabbit forgets the important last part of the message, or he deliberately conveys a misleading one. Mr. Man, frightened, confused and angered, makes a nasty insinuation. When Brer Rabbit reiterates the remark, the moon becomes so enraged at him that he splits the rabbit's lip with an ax; hence, the hare-lip. Brer Rabbit in turn scratches the moon's face. These scratches account for the shadows on the surface of the moon.

The main discrepancy between the Southern tales and the Hottentot tales is only in the wording of the moon's message to man. The moon said that as she died and rose again, so too all men must die and come to life again. The hare delivered only the first part of the message, omitting man's rebirth. This Hottentot version has definite religious overtones, and the phrasing of the message reminds us of the religious tenets of life, death, and resurrection. So too, another rabbit which symbolizes Christian redemption is the Easter Bunny.

"The Wonderful Tar-baby Story" is the link between the tales of the South with the myths of India. In the Bodhisatta rendition, Pancavadha Jataka, known as the Prince Five Weapons (perhaps symbolizing the bodily extremities of hands, feet and head), meets the monster "Demon with Matted Hair," also translated "Ogre Hairy-Grip." This word probably refers to the animal, the hare, rather than its characteristic fur or outgrowth. Much the same plot ensues with the Prince becoming stuck fast, rendered helpless, and thoroughly humiliated.

Harris once wrote that the Brer Rabbit stories were "probably of remote African origin." What he did not know was the striking similarities of the African tales and the Southern ones. African folklore makes little mention of the hare as a character; on the Gold Coast, Spider assumes the Brer Rabbit role. Kwaku Tyom, Spider's son, steals *cavassa* from a nearby farm. When questioned by Spider, Kwaku refuses to show the farm's location, admonishing him that a terrible evil will befall his father if he goes there. Unaware that Spider has poked a hole through his sack and filled it with ashes, Kwaku makes another raid on Farmer's patch. (This part suggests the Brer Rabbit story "Brer Fox and the Stolen Goobers.") Spider follows the ash trail to the farm; here he is frightened by an ominous "something" made of crossed sticks with snail shells hanging on it. The terrible "something" is a type of scarecrow whose snail shells signified to Spider that it possessed the "latent power of a god to entrap anyone who interferes with what is under its guardianship." Out of fear, Spider becomes vexed and proceeds to stick his extremities. He remains in this position until Farmer arrives. Promising to repay all as soon as they reach his house, Spider tricks Farmer into releasing him. When he is out of Farmer's reach, Spider jumps to the rafters, where Farmer is still looking for him. It is well to note that Spider (and his family) can assume human form, as well as the form of the spider at will. His anthropomorphic appearance is small, lean, and hairy. Again, "hairy" seems a play on words, but may in reality refer to the fur (hair) of the rabbit (hare).

In "How Spider and Kwaku Tse Killed the King's Cows and Took His Wives," Spider and his other son, Kwaku Tse, hack away the insides of two cows. (Their Uncle Remus counterparts, Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, perform likewise in "The Sad Fate of Mr. Fox.") Not satisfied with having killed the King's means of subsistence, Spider seeks further revenge (for inhospitality) by casting a spell on the two wives. With the wives' hair, Spider makes a potion to conjure up evil spirits. Thus Spider's gastronomic and erotic appetites are satisfied.

Besides the parallelism of theme in the "Wonderful Tar-baby" and "The Spider and the Farmer," Brer Rabbit and Spider have almost identical characteristics. Both possess magical powers, verging on black magic voodoo; both are extremely clever, ingenious, and tricky.

The preceding passages indicate that the Uncle Remus stories are not of American origin. However, the idea of the rabbit — supposedly the weakest of creatures — versus the humble conditions of the slave, could not have been conceived in Africa before slavery. While the Brer Rabbit stories were born in Africa, they were nurtured in the slave quarters of the South.

Even harder than the attempt to discover the origin of the Brer Rabbit stories is the task of categorization. The tales could be labeled "fables," because they remotely reflect the wisdom and situations of the animal stories of La Fontaine and Aesop. As in fables, the animals in these tales do satirize human beings. All the animals wear clothes, exchange pleasantries, work, and even have taffy pulls. Brer Rabbit's speech and mannerisms mock those of the Southern "gentleman."

The term "myth" also fits because of the element of magic and religious ritual. Brer Rabbit functions as a priest or witch when he conjures up evil spirits. It is interesting to note that the Brer Rabbit stories offer no moral thesis; the rabbit himself is unethical, yet he always triumphs.

Because the tales mirror the mental frustrations of the Negro race, they do possess the mythic quality of representation of a psychological state. Thus, "racial myth" aptly describes the Brer Rabbit tales reflecting "the groping aspirations of the soul of a people, and its reactions to its environments."

The white Little Boy expresses our own horror at the unjust brutality of Brer Rabbit when he watches the innocent possum pay for his theft. In his reply, Uncle Remus imparts a wise, cold fact of life to the child. The basic truth he offers is that good does not necessarily triumph. His philosophy might be paraphrased by a contemporary Negro as: "Like it or not, life is like that, baby."

Traditionally, in literature the fox is cunning, physically stronger than the rabbit, and is usually the hero. In a role reversal, Brer Rabbit is not the meek weakling. This protagonist's mental capacity far out-measures his muscular capabilities. Not only does the rabbit cleverly dupe Brer Fox, his arch enemy, but he also makes a complete fool of him. Consistently, he seeks malicious revenge on those who have attempted to hurt him; he shows no mercy in retaliation.

On the psychological level, the rabbit symbolizes the Negro's half-surpassed antagonism toward the white man (typified by the fox). The only means then open for the Negro slave to strike back against the "Boss Man" was through the antics of Brer Rabbit. His mischievous pranks evoked the white man's laughter. What the white man failed to recognize was that the folk tales were "part of an elaborate psychic drainage system;" and that *he* was the fox. Through Brer Fox, the white man became the dupe; he was literally out-foxed. In the end, he became the communal meal; his woman became accessible to the rabbit.

In most of twentieth-century fiction, the Negro is stereotyped as a "child of spontaneous joy, a comedian." With all the psychological abuse the Negro is forced to take, he is still expected literally to "grin and bear it." Often it is possible to mistake a man's anguished gritting of teeth for a beaming smile. The stereotypes of Uncle Ben, Aunt Jemima, the shoeshine boy, the porter, the jazz musician, all "give" a toothy smile. Uncle Remus is a prototype of the Negro "grin giver." "The venerable old darky" gives the tales with a "kindly beam" and a "most infectious chuckle." Brer Rabbit "gives" Brer Fox a working over, grinning from "year to year," and with a snickering laugh.

Even Harris, together with the other whites dismissed the tales as "harmless" stories belonging to the savage of the African jungles. The joke was, and is on whitey. "The Negro is America's metaphor." Now we are increasingly aware of the "Negro problem" with the riots of the last decade. Perhaps we should have paid more attention to the Brer Rabbit stories. History seems to be repeating itself — this time with the black man. Perhaps it will take another Battle of Bull Run, or rather a Riot of the Rabbit Race. We are very much like the Fox, the dupe who never learns from bitter experience. In *White Man, Listen!,* Richard Wright expresses the racial

prejudice problem of America on a wider scale:

> The history of the Negro in America is the history of America written in vivid and boldly terms; it is the history of Western Man writ small.

While Uncle Tom's Cabin depicted the dark days of slavery, the Brer Rabbit tales presented the lighter side. Uncle Remus is the ex-slave. Not only is he a poet, but also a philosopher. Remember that Uncle Remus is the narrator of the tales. He functions merely as the mouthpiece to preserve the Southern Negro dialect. Remus is the contented and devoted Negro. But in the allegories he relates, the rogue rabbit deals (although subtly) with the "Negro situation" long before the first civil rights rallies.

The two outstanding racial taboos still strongly feared in the South concern the erotic and the gastronomic. These two bans would remind us of the social system of caste in India. Through the efforts of Mahatma Gandi, "untouchability" is no longer strictly enforced, but it is still widely practiced. Caste today in India is a kind of snobbery because it forbids eating or marrying outside one's station in life out of fear of contamination from the impure inferior people. On a parallel with the Indian caste, the typical Southern response of a white in support of segregation is: "I am not prejudiced. But, I would not want to see my daughter married to one of *them*." Intermarriage is tabooed because the family, which is the product of marriage, is the basic unit of our society. Here the father is the head of the family; and so it follows that the only way the Negro man will be on the same social stratum as the white man is to marry a white woman.

Like the caste system of India, a means of preventing an unfavorable marriage in the South is to prohibit eating together. It seems that the old cliche, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," is true. If so, it would explain further the opposition to desegregation in restaurants. The partaking of food, the meal, is a symbol of neighborliness, sharing, brotherhood, and in particular — community. Breaking bread actually does break down social barriers. For this reason, Southern laws forbade Negroes to eat at the same table or even in the same restaurant with whites.

A main tension running throughout the Brer Rabbit stories is whether or not the communal meal will ever take place. The closest the animal kingdom (man himself is an animal) comes to food-sharing is the story when Brer Fox invites Brer Rabbit to a joint feast in which the rabbit is intended as the main course. Once more the rabbit makes the fox look ridiculous. Open warfare breaks out when the rabbit leaves, because the other animals (except Brer Rabbit) cannot survive without community food-sharing. Upon his return, Brer Rabbit kills and skins the Wolf. Brer Rabbit remains cynical because he realizes that the others now share their food out of fear rather than out of true communalism.

In another story, Brer Fox makes a genuine food-sharing gesture when he and Brer Rabbit hack away the insides of Bookay Cow. Now it is too late. In an act of supreme malevolence Brer Rabbit revengefully betrays his benefactor to the farmer. "Makin' like he mighty sorry," he watches as Brer Fox is beaten to death. Ironically, Brer Rabbit almost succeeds in tricking Mrs. Fox into cooking her husband's head in a soup.

The factor which determines who must observe the taboos is that factor over which no human being as yet has control — the color of one's skin. When the white Little Boy makes the startling discovery that Remus's palms are white, Uncle Remus replies: "De time was w'en we 'uz all niggers tergedder . ." Then he continues his explanation with "Why the Negro is Black." In another episode, Remus comments:

> Widout his own shirt and widout his own pants . . . Brer Rabbit . . . he don't look like Brer Rabbit. He look like any other ordinary rabbit in de wurld.

The best known of the Remus stories is "The Wonderful Tar-baby Story" which deals with the very "sticky" subject of pigmentation. The white's embodiment, Brer Fox, attempts to catch and rid himself of Brer Rabbit by placing the gooey trap in the center of the

road. At first Brer Rabbit greets it cordially. Repeatedly, he courteously says, "Howdy." His ingratiatory behavior is satiric mimicry of southern etiquette which demanded from the Negro this bowing and scraping. To this carrot-eating cynic, the world is absurd and hypocritical; he is engaged in a constant fight for food, sex, power, and prestige. Brer Rabbit firmly believes that "the race is to the swiftest." Angered because the tar-baby will not reply, Brer Rabbit strikes it with his five extremities, becoming stuck fast. Physically helpless, the ever-resourceful rabbit deceives Brer Fox into releasing him from the trap. Then he employs reverse psychology in begging the fox not to throw him into the brier patch, when in reality the patch is his refuge.

In "A Plantation Witch," the characters are Negroes who assume animal forms (including rabbits). After the retelling, the Little Boy has a nightmare. In the dream, the Negroes change skins at will. They possess the same power as Spider. Often in the guise of rabbits, they roam the countryside terrorizing whites. It is a well known fact that while rabbits are meek and swift, they are also extremely prolific. By sheer numbers, the Negro race could become equal in number to the whites, maybe even become the ruling majority. Sexual potency is still another reason for the physical form of the rabbit in this story as well as for Brer Rabbit. For far greater than the fear of food-sharing is the South's dread of sex-sharing. Until very recently, the word "sex" was a charged word; it still is in almost all social circles. Out of fear of something that is in itself good, mankind as usual thought of sex as something dirty and immoral. The white man of the high social classes had free access to the Negro's woman, but not vice versa. The white dismissed his own immortality as something connected with seductive, oversexed Negroes; and although the white man enjoyed promiscuity, he denied it to the white woman.

In another back-fire situation, Brer Fox schemes to drown Brer Rabbit on their way to Miss Meadows' birthday party; both are competing for the favors of Miss Meadows. Feigning illness, Brer Rabbit persuades the fox to give him a ride on his back. When Brer Fox slows down to throw the hare over the bridge, Brer Rabbit digs his spurs into the fox's back, riding him like a race horse to the party. With such an undignified entrance, Brer Rabbit has thoroughly humiliated Brer Fox in front of the gals. Ultimately, the bunny has his choice of all the women.

Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* states that "all men are created equal." The more realistic quote is that of Uncle Remus: "Some folks is more equal than others." As a result of the Civil War, the Negro was liberated from the physical bonds of slavery. Yet even today, our social system and psychic attitudes keep him subservient. His inferior position is sustained politically, socially, and economically. The white man of post-bellum America may have felt some pity for the Negro, but he developed and still retains his paternalistic attitude toward him.. He thinks of him as a child unable to adjust to an adult world. Whites show sympathy to the "niggers who know their place." The Negro must know enough to use the back door; he must never shake hands with a white. Although he pays the same fare, he is relegated to the rear of the bus. Certain places such as restaurants are inaccessible to him; certain women, especially whites, are unavailable to him.

Perhaps it was his illegitimacy that gave Harris his inferiority complex; he was extremely shy and socially awkward. In the midst of children, or in the Turnwold slave quarters where he first heard the stories about Brer Rabbit — only then was Harris at ease. His personality gave him a deep rapport with the predicament of the Negro slave, and he intended to bring the "Negro problem" to Northern whites who until then had regarded it as abstract. But he presented the situation in a way agreeable to both North and South. In "saving face" for the South, he depicted Uncle Remus as a wise, humorous old ex-slave "who had nothing but pleasant memories of the discipline of slavery."

Although Harris sympathized with the plight of the Negro, his position as a middle class, white Southerner prevented his realiza-

tion of the stories as racial myths. Because the subject of equality and pigmentation is so obvious in the stories, Harris must have comprehended the symbolism. But it is doubtful that he realized the subtly disguised racial taboos. His reader rationalized that the Brer Rabbit tales were of African origin — that the impending threat was simply a "roaring comedy of animal life." In this "roaring comedy of animal life," the Buzzard, the Tarrypin, and the Bull-Frog — all of the weakest animals — make utter fools of Brer Fox, the Bear, and the Wolf. The three strongest all suffer violent deaths at the hands of the so-called weakest. Perhaps this is further warning of joint harassment of the white race by other minorities.

There are different kinds of laughter. Aside from the hearty, good natured laugh, there is the sinister snicker as seen on the ugly face of the bad guy. The laugh of Brer Rabbit is usually a scorn-projecting scoff. Sometimes Brer Rabbit guffaws heartily at his triumph over the fox's stupidity. Other times his mirth is malicious; he displays a villainous sneer when he is avenged. When Brer Rabbit stands by watching Brer Fox being cruelly beaten to death, the rabbit does not laugh; but the old Negro, Uncle Remus, does chuckle. Only through the comic escapades of Brer Rabbit could the Negro release his inhibitions and subtly express his hostility against the powerful white man. Now this country is engaged in a war between the races. This time it is a declared struggle for civil rights, and the demonstrations are bringing to reality Brer Rabbit's attacks against our social system.

The modern parallel to Brer Rabbit in the comic strip and cartoon world is Bugs Bunny. Psychologists tell us that humor helps man "escape" from reality, and laughter relieves his tensions. People identify with Bugs because he personifies the "little guy" who lacks brawn and who must depend on his cleverness. The white man with the supposedly superior intelligence is reduced to scorn in the personage of Elmer Fudd. Elmer has a speech impediment which makes him absurd when he utters "Cwasy Wabbit." He is "different;" he is odd-looking with his bald head and his short, squat stature. His behavior seems strange and is indeed ridiculous. Even his name is ludicrous.

Fudd possesses power; he owns the farm. His gun is the destructive weapon. Because he lacks a gun, Bugs Bunny has virtually no physical means of inflicting bodily injury on Fuddsy. So, Bugs plagues Fudd almost to neurosis. Fudd's countless schemes to obliterate the rabbit fail because Bugs is cute and acute. On a higher psychological level, Fudd symbolizes machinery, war, death — everything man fears. Bugs Bunny is not only the white man, but mankind itself. We all are a little like rabbits; when thoroughly scared and with no place to run, we must depend on our wits for survival.

The wisdom of Sir Philip Sidney is an appropriate conclusion:

> Prettie Allegories stealing under the formal Tales of beastes, makes many more beastly then (sic) beastes: begin to heare the sound of vertue from these dumb speakers.

THAT SNOWY WINTER OF OUR HERMITAGE

Frances Panarauskas, '69

We must have burned two hundred railroad ties that winter. Into those fires we threw the scads of empty marshmallow boxes we had accumulated and tried to see if beer cans burn. And the night John left, *War and Peace* and Moscow were ablaze again.

That snowy winter of our hermitage was designated for walks and reading, long philosophical discussion and, of course, skiing — for man is not composed of soul alone. It was fortunate that the landlord had thought to pile the ties beneath the woodshed and that mother had provisioned us well with canned goods and frozen pastries. Certainly none of us developed much domestic sensibility.

Amy was too wrapped up in her canvass to consider culinary techniques. John, naturally, was entrenched in his chair near the lamp with his book and rarely stirred unless it were to poke the fire or ramble about the woods. Once he axed an entire tree by himself; but the effort was fruitless. An opportune moment was never found to help him haul it in from the forest.

Needless to say, we gloried in that hard Vermont winter. Those blizzards and fires were tremendous — beserk with intensity and liberation. Officially the upkeep of the hearth was assigned to the men. But Lethargic Larry had come for the total relaxation. He slept, laughed and, when so behooved, scrawled postcards to girls he had met in college. David had come to ski. So John and I tended the fire.

Every night 'til New Year's we gathered to relate all the insights we had gleaned that day. We talked of pawprints spotted in the snow, of the bumbling rural plumber who had rescued us from disaster, and of how many chapters John had perused. In our communal Walden we were exempt from universities and offices, deans and parents. We had daydreamed with many others in various Student Unions about getting AWAY. And we did go away.

Amy declared that the first of the year required a celebration. So we fiddled with ties and eye-make-up, a few cases of beer, and a bushel of popcorn to create the semblance of a New Year's Eve.

Guy Lombardo was the hit of the night for David mimicked him while we danced to crazy radio songs. Meanwhile, Larry determined to propose a toast and down a can for Guy and every fool in Times Square.

In good pagan fashion we allotted our feast a week's duration. The celebration, like the fire, never smoldered. By this time Amy and David had decided that platonic relationships were for the Greeks alone. They began to be as serious as anyone can be at a perpetual party. John shunned Tolstoy and began to speculate about the feasibility of making our Walden into a resort. We wanted to share this glory with the world. Larry was secluded with the keg.

The interminable festival was ruined by Larry's father. He wrote to say he would under no circumstances finance another winter of indolence in the woods. Amy cried about the cruelty of the world. David declared we would embark upon the greatest farewell party in western history. That inspiration revived the jubilation. But David and I eventually celebrated alone.

Amy got a letter too, and decided to marry I forget whom before he enlisted. Larry's father duly extricated him from the forest. John tossed Tolstoy to the flames and walked out. Someone wrote to say he is at Dartmouth again and is doing rather well. So David and I are left to develop our genius alone. The world can't lure us back. But those sparks keep burning holes in my sweaters.

Nightflight

Night showers
wash the dark
that hangs over
buoyed by lights
lined up and waiting
for the wet glint
roaring its way
out of the sky.

It brakes down the runway
grabs for the slippery tar,
the now droning hulk
stiffly crouches
until sent off,
its bulk
erased by rain
letting only the
lights
move
on.

Diane Ratte, '69

R. I. P.

When I was young
there was a god —
Saint Jesus of the haloed head.
He never smiled but
always eyed us
from calendars
and pious imaginations,
where he was manifest alone
in fleshless incarnation.
And Saint Patrick was
more of a man to me
for driving out snakes
and devils from Ireland
and making metaphors
from shamrocks
than was that melancholic
angel-baby godman christ
who's dead now
by the way,
(if such paper dolls can die).
Perhaps he flaked away
like ancient paint,
or shattered like a
sugar peep-hole easter egg,
in the attic neglect of
souvenir pennants
and crippled dolls —
the way of all mementoes
which always are of death.

Kathleen A. Rogers, '69

PIROUETTE

KATHLEEN A. ROGERS, '69

That farm, my childhood's
summer suntime place,
has a fan-on-stilts-type
windmill —
a whirligig —
vain as a pinwheel
in trying to fly —
earthbound
round and round
the soul of a sunflower
chained to a treadmill.

KATHERINE HARRINGTON, '70

The Char-Toothed Rhinoceros and the Great Sperm Whale and Things Like That...

Mary Margaret Teague, '69

"I tried hanging by my toenails once when I was fiveish, but it didn't work then either," said Jonas Block. He was scratching his foot over the floor register, and that was what reminded him.

"Huh?" Thaddeus put down his manual and studied his friend. Thaddeus Zink read manuals all the time. Jonas once asked him why, and Thaddeus told him how one day he'd take all the things he'd learned from manuals and *make* something out of them like that man he read about once who wrote a whole book on whales. Now Thaddeus put down his manual and looked at Jonas.

"Huh?" he said. "Why'd you want t'go hanging by your toenails, anyway, huh? What a damn fool waste of time!" Thaddeus turned back to his manual. It was on how to build a yearround bird house.

"No understanding. That's what's wrong with this place. I get *no understanding!*" Jonas was pacing up and down the room. He couldn't get excited unless he paced. That bothered him too, because his foot still itched and he really wanted to stand still and scratch it some more on the floor register. But Jonas felt a need to pace. He was hemmed in. Twenty-four years old, and all hemmed in. He thought he would go out of his mind.

"If I don't get out of here," Jonas said, "I'm going to lose my mind! I'm going out." He waited for Thaddeus to say something, but Thaddeus was figuring what kind of wood he should use on his birdhouse and didn't notice. Jonas sighed and shook his head. Then he put on his galoshes and went out.

The sun was shining on the concrete, making it white so that it hit hard on Jonas' eyes. He was glad he could look down and see his black galoshes. They reminded him of what he was about, how he was alive and all. Otherwise, Jonas was afraid that he would just get eaten up in all the harsh, white gleam.

Jonas walked down by the center, and stopped to watch the construction workers in the new city hall. He thought at first that he would tell them not to bother with it anymore, but then he figured he might have to tell them why, and that would alarm everyone. So instead of telling them to quit, Jonas bought a bottle of Coke and sat down on the curbstone to watch the progress. Around him the white glanced hard off the quarry rock, and powdered the ground. Bits of quartz broiled in the harsh light.

Jonas sipped his Coke and wiped the back of his neck with his handkerchief. He felt hot. He looked down at his black galoshes. They seemed rather tight. He thought that maybe he should loosen them. It would do no harm, he was sure, to loosen them just for a little while. But then, Jonas thought if he

loosened them, he might lose them, and if he lost them he'd be — well, he didn't know where he'd be. He'd be confused! That's what would happen, and Jonas *hated* confusion! He'd be confused with it all, but then leaving them on would be so hot. Jonas decided to ponder the problem. He stared at the vinyl toes. They were quite shiny, so that he could almost see his reflection in them. Jonas smiled at himself. He had brown hair and a nice smile, except he was missing an eye tooth on the left side. He slid his tongue into the small hole and made a clicking sound. Somebody laughed, and Jonas saw the blue shoes standing not three feet from him.

"Hi." The girl seemed tall from where Jonas sat on the curbstone. He didn't like that so he stood up and stretched himself full length. She was still laughing at him with a pretty mouth and two dimples. Jonas liked her.

"Hi, yourself," he said. He thought she was kind of cute, not more than twenty-ish, or so. She really wasn't all that tall, and she had on a blue shirtwaist dress. It was the shoes that really got to him, though. "You live around here?" he asked. He waved his hand in no direction at all and she laughed again. He liked her laugh. It came right through her whole body and out her throat.

"Did you ever hear yodelling?" he asked. He thought she'd be really good at that. Or she might be a good singer.

"Hey!" she said, "I do live around here. But the yodelling — maybe you're crazy — no, I never did hear it. *You* never did, did you?" she wrinkled her nose and he saw that she had a red sunburn mark across it. And freckles that impressed him. That she didn't cover them up, or wear something to cover her nose from burning.

"No. I never did hear yodelling," he said, "but my roommate, Tad, he read me a manual on it once. You've got t'have pretty good breath control for it, you know. And they always say you need to exercise your chords. You have good chords, you know . . ."

Her laugh rippled out again, and he grinned a little himself. He was twenty-four years old, and he had never cared for girls after his teens. He couldn't figure what was getting into him, but he liked it.

"Hey," she said, "how do you know so much about my chords? You're crazy. Do you live around here?" It sounded as if she asked the question in afterthought. He didn't like that.

"Ya," he said, "I live up by the U. My friend, Tad, and I, we're grad students. I'm here for the summer, and in the fall, well, we're supposed to be giving dissertations." He stopped in consternation. He didn't want her to know about him. If she knew, she might get scared. That was a bad thought. If she were scared, she'd go away, and then he'd be back in a rut again. He thought he wouldn't tell her anymore. "What do you do, yourself?" he said.

She pushed ash blonde hair from her eyes. "I'm a vendor," she said.

"Oh?"

"Yes. At the park. Southampton Street, you know?"

"Oh, ya," he said.

"Well, they sell things, you know. I mean, like cotton candy, and all that. And I'm a vendor. Three to eleven shift with Thursdays off. It's not bad." She waved to one of the riveters and he yelled over, "How's things, Sally?" Jonas studied her.

"Sally," he said. "Why, your name's not Sally."

"No. It's not." She did not seem surprised that he would know this.

"Well," he said.

"Circe," she said. "That's why I make them call me Sally. I mean, who wants to go around with a name like Circe all her life, for heaven's sakes? You know what I mean?"

"Circe —" he hesitated.

"White," she supplied, and started to laugh.

"Circe White," he said. He started to laugh too. He stopped, and looked at the expanse of concrete before him, then down at the black galoshes. They stared back at him, and he thought they warned him not to get too close. He glanced up. She was watching him, he thought, and he saw her eyes, how nice they were. He squirmed in his boots. He wanted to stay, but —

"Well," he said. "It's been fun meeting you. You do a good job with the cotton candy, now. O.K.? I think I better be moving. Got to pick up Tad's new manual."

"You're going?" she said. She didn't say anything else, and he felt as if, in some way, she was robbing him. It made him feel bad to see her standing there, so quiet.

"Yeah. I really should get a move on. What with one thing and another, I haven't done much all day, you know. And that's bad. If I don't get moving pretty soon, I'll be in a real *mess!* I mean, things'll be so fuzzed up, I'll lose my mind." They both laughed at this, and he watched her nose wrinkle up that funny way again. They parted then, Sally saying she had to get to work anyway, and Jonas to look for another manual.

When she had left him far behind, Jonas turned to watch her. Her skirt flicked out behind her, though there was no wind. He watched her till she swung out of view, laughing at the sky. Then he strode back to the apartment.

Thaddeus was reading a manual on the care and feeding of itinerant birds. Jonas opened a can of Chicken Noodle soup, and while it heated, he removed his galoshes, placing them carefully by the door. When the stuff boiled, he and Tad sat at the counter.

"Tad," he said, "I met this girl today. Her name's Sally. You'd have liked her."

Tad laid the manual on the countertop, careful to leave it open to his place. "Oh, yeah?" he said. He broke saltines into his soup.

Jonas went on, "Ya. You really would have liked her. She was a funny kind of girl. I mean, she didn't even ask me about my boots. It was like she didn't even see them! She was different — really different—"

"What's this girl do who's so different?" Tad queried.

"Well, that's the best part. She's a vendor. Cotton candy, and like that. Down at the amusement park. You know that place. We passed it on the way into town. With the—"

"Yeah!" Tad interrupted. "With the lousy yellow-painted sign. Jese, she sells cotton candy under that lousy sign? She must be all right!" He sounded really excited.

"Ya — Ya, she was all right —" Jonas felt good inside. If Tad didn't see anything wrong with his liking a perfectly strange girl, then it *was* all right. It didn't really matter about her name, after all.

"Well — " Tad was waiting.

"Huh?"

"When'll I meet her? I asked you twice."

"Oh uh —" Jonas was at a loss. But then it came to him. "Uh — Tonight! I mean, tomorrow. I'm meeting her tonight, and then you can meet her tomorrow. Okay?"

"Fine," Tad said. He got up, and went back to the manual, but before he had been at it long, he glanced at Jonas. "Not gonna forget your boots, are ya?"

Jonas looked him in the eye, then he shrugged. "No," he said. "I guess not. I wish — But no — I guess not." Jonas felt mixed up. He hated that, so he thought he would take a nap.

When he woke, Jonas felt he'd slept well. He remembered how he had dreamed of a clown, standing on a beach. A beautiful clown, with all bright colors, standing alone, unaware of anything but the sand under his feet. He stood there for quite a while, with nonchalance, Jonas thought. And when the blue and shining whale spun swiftly through the water, the clown watched calmly till it settled at his feet. Then with much the same nonchalance, he climbed in.

Jonas liked this dream. It made him feel peaceful, somehow. He thought he had been stupid to worry because of the girl's name. He dressed in his best summer sports jacket, and chose a stiff new linen handkerchief. Before putting on his galoshes he gave them an extra fine polishing. When he was quite through his preparations he studied himself intently. He wanted very much to make a good impression on this girl "Circe," he thought. "Sally," he quickly amended.

Tad saluted him from behind the manual as he left. It was with a strangely adventuresome feeling that he descended the stairs, down and down and down. When he reached the street, the sun had gone down, and a haze of white-ish summer dust had settled into the night. Jonas sweat nervously as he stepped swiftly in the direction of the amusement park. The lights in this section of town were brighter, glaring almost, dispersing for a time the white, heat-driven haze. He saw the con-

cession stand with its garish signs. Something thumped rapidly in the pit of his stomach. He wished it would keep quiet so he could think. Then he saw her, in the booth behind the cotton candy machine. She looked up and smiled, as if she'd been waiting for him.

"Hi," she said it the same way. And she wrinkled her nose too.

"Hi, again," he said. He laughed. It was a strange sound coming from Jonas because it was a good loud laugh. Most times he couldn't laugh too loud because the boots stifled him. He laughed again for the fun of it.

"I'm on break in about an hour..." Circe's voice came through his laugh. He waved to let her know he'd be back. Then he wandered through the maze. He hadn't been to a place like this since his childhood, and it intrigued him. What he liked best about it though, was that people didn't even notice his boots. They must've thought he belonged to the troupe. That made him comfortable. He entered a tent where they were displaying a live rhinoceros. He saluted its ugliness, and saw that its horn was black. That made him wonder. When he met Circe behind the hot dog bar, he asked her about it.

"Oh, the rhino," she said. "Well, what happened was it got seared." She saw the disbelief in his eyes. "No kidding, Jonas, it got seared by a blowtorch just on the top of the horn, and it's been like that ever since. The funny part is, though, that it don't even seem to bother him, and people they notice it all the time." She laughed. "Funny, though, it hasn't changed him. He's still the same cantankerous rhino he was in the first place, you know. Only now it gives him an excuse. It's sort of as if he got burnt on purpose." She was looking at him openly, with wide innocent eyes, and Jonas couldn't suspect her of meaning more than she said. That's not fair to her, he thought.

The grounds were disappearing in the background, and Jonas didn't even notice. They walked for a while in silence, and all the time Jonas was aware that in their boots his toes were crinkling in excitement. They stopped under a tree and she turned to him. He felt nervous, lost sort of and he looked down to his boots. They were black and shining and he began to feel safe again.

"Let's go see what they're doing with the pond," he said.

She did not say a word, but followed him silently, a knowing smile playing around her lips. She clung to his hand, as if afraid to let go. It frightened him a little, but he was sure she could not see it.

"My roommate wants to meet you."

"Oh?"

"Ya. I thought maybe tomorrow night, if that was all right with you. Uh —"

"But, I don't know you," she said. "Why should I meet your friend? Tell me about you, Jonas," She was smiling in the dark. He could hear it in her voice. That angered him. It really angered him.

"Okay, I'll tell you," he said. "I'll tell you everything. Just like everybody else! I'll give it all away — I'll — I'll tell you why I can't off my boots. That's what I'll tell you. They — " Jonas was getting terribly upset. He began to pace back and forth over the grass.

"Jonas, don't," she said. "Don't tell me about the boots. Not that way." She stood very close to him, and Jonas began to shake. "Jonas," she said, "I understand — I do! — Don't hide from me!" But Jonas felt the shaking get worse. He stood, shaking, all soft and scared inside, and the boots, they were confusing him, all hot and tight.

"Come on," she urged. She grasped his hand, and began to run. Streaming hair behind her she ran, dragging Jonas with her until he could not stop himself, and he laughed. They ran down towards the pond, laughing into the air, which was cool here, and clear. Then, Jonas tripped and they fell, the two of them, laughing and tumbling down the hill to the water. Jonas felt a tingling in his body. He felt light and alive. He screamed into the black night, and laughed at the white moon. Something rubbed his feet, cool and soft. He looked down at the grass in which he stood, and back up the hill where he saw the black impressions on the night that were his boots.

She was lying on the grass at his feet, laughing with her blue shoes thrown to the ground beside her. He put out a hand to help her rise. "I love you," he said.

To Read Franz Kafka

Patricia Herold, '70

Franz Kafka lit his stories with the stark yellow light of the interrogator's lamp. He switched it on in small black-boxed rooms, and poured it over the upturned faces of his characters. You looked at the defenseless faces staring into the blindness, but the reflection was so bright that all you could really see were frames of bright, coiling wisps of hair.

And then the light was off and you closed the book and you could still feel the way the words fled across the page as if some unseen force beneath was reaching up and grabbing at their feet. You can't remember much except for the bold outlines that leapt out from between the two darknesses, and yet knew that something was there because there are persistent spots of light that still blink blue in your eyes.

You had been swept along in this strange turbulance, and now that its over, you are wondering just what happened. Did you identify with the character? Could you identify with Gregor Samsa? Gregor Samsa who awoke one morning from "uneasy dreams" to find himself "transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect?" Is it Gregor, or George Bendemann, or the faceless "I" of so many of the sketches? Or, is it the situations that are so compelling? The situations that burst unexpected on you, that you are lulled into accepting by an uncanny, matter-of-fact persuasiveness of tone.

All these things come into your mind as you sit, trying to understand what was said, until you realize that this impossible, inexplicable mood Kafka has woven is, somehow, the key to his skill. The tension betrays his concern with the inexpressible — without expressing it. Kafka, with utter simplicity of structure and undefined realms of time and place, has left great gaps. Ambiguity is the essence of his language. Thoughts and feelings are suggested by silence and fragmentary speeches. The antithesis of Joyce, whose quest for completeness even penetrated the unconscious, is Kafka, who seeks his universals in the words and thoughts that remain unexpressed. He does not pass judgment; he does not clarify. He does not endow his heroes with helpful adjective-clues to their personalities. He merely subjects them to their impossible fates, and the tensions that rumble beneath simple phrases is the tension that for him, divides the individual and the universe.

Martin Buber, referring to Kafka's stories, once asked: "Is there any connection left at all between a sense and order in the universe and this nonsense, the disorder of the human world?" This is the question that Kafka must have subjected himself to, because his stories are vivid dramatizations of individuals who cannot adjust to a world that is hostile to them. His heroes are existential heroes, men

who reflect a universal discord, a break between man and his world. The people who surround him are spokesman of a universe that is totally unconcerned with his personal destiny and radically hostile to him. The universe answers his craving for direction with an icy silence.

Kafka describes these predicaments with all the terseness and detachment of the commentator who delivers the news with unshakable steadiness. The more hopeless the information they must dispense, the more controlled their personal reaction to it. This is one of the methods that Kafka uses to relate his stories. On the surface they may appear to be simple parables devoid of elaborate descriptions to create mood and motive. That is the key to their credibility. The first sentence of the "Metamorphosis" is an example of this control.

> As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. He was lying on his hard, as it were armor-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his dome-like brown belly divided into stiff arched segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes.

Long sentences lull the reader into acceptance of the situation. Clipped phrases provide emphasis. Kafka, you can be sure, will continue at this pace until the story is wrung of its every irony, until the paradox that is the nucleus of his work is etched on the reader's mind in bold, black outline.

He does not attempt to explain. The incomprehensible asserts its intention to remain obscure. The only thing we are sure of is that we are not dreaming. Gregor is not dreaming. This is happening! And the only thing we do know is that Kafka is dissecting the situation at hand with steadfast scrutiny, completely avoiding Poe-like descriptions and blood-curdling gore. Somehow the simple thing is much more terrifying. How is it that Gregor can lie on his bed and accept his fate so passively?

> Gregor's eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky — one could hear rain drops beating on the window gutter — made him quite melancholy. What about sleeping a little longer and forgetting all this nonsense, he thought, but it could not be done, for he was accustomed to sleep on his right side and in his present condition he could not turn himself over. However violently he forced himself to his right side he always rolled on his back again. He tried it at least a hundred times, shutting his eyes to keep from seeing his struggling legs, and only desisted when he began to feel in his side a faint dull ache he had never experienced before.

The straightforwardness of description makes the situation all the more tense. The story goes on at an unrelieved pace, almost sing-song in its matter-of-factness. "But then he said to himself: 'Before it strikes seven I must get out of this bed, without fail. Anyhow, by that time someone will have come from the office to ask for me, since it opens before seven.'"

You cannot believe that Gregor has not asked for a reason, has not screamed out in the realization of his loss, has not screamed "Why?". Gregor is worried about being late for work. He is worried about the minutes that are ticking away on the mantel. Gregor, the commercial salesman, is worried about facing the man behind the desk. He has already accepted the simple, monstrous fact, and throughout the story his family accepts it. His sister brings him leftovers on tin plates, his mother avoids the room, his father paces in front of the door. Gregor can only hear their muffled, whispered discussions as they attempt to rearrange their lives, not around an attempt to find a cure for Gregor, but around a new way to pay the bills.

Kafka has made the metamorphosis of Gregor an objective reality for the family. It is something horrendous, inacceptable, but nevertheless actual. It becomes obvious that it is their behavior that is strange, dreamlike, incongruous, inappropriate, and therefore, unlifelike! It is the ordinary behavior of humanity confronted with the ugliness of fact.

After the metamorphosis, Gregor remains almost continuously behind locked doors. In the two or three months of his new life he leaves his room only three times, and from these outbreaks, as they are seen by his family,

are developed the three main episodes of the story. They achieve a unity, a pattern of exposition, conflict, and climax. The first exploits the tension between the horrible and the comic: Gregor, having by habit locked himself in his bedroom the previous evening, wakes up transformed, maneuvers himself out of bed and to the door, unlocks it with his jaws, shows himself to the family, tries to speak but is not understood and is driven by his father back into his room, where he hides under a sofa. The room is now locked from the outside. On the second chapter this atmosphere is sustained and violent action develops. Gregor's food is now brought to him by his sister. He takes to crawling all over the walls and ceiling of his room. The family removes his furniture, he places himself over a picture on the wall to prevent its removal, and his mother faints when she sees him. (Gregor had usually spared her of the sight of him by staying under the sofa.) He follows his distraught sister into the living room and crawls all over it until he is attacked by his father, who wounds him by throwing an apple which lodges in his back, and who is apparently only prevented from killing him by the entreaties of the mother. In the third chapter, though comic elements persist, the main effect developed is one of pathos. The family, as a concession, leaves Gregor's door open in the evening, but they neglect him more and more. They take in three lodgers who eat succulent meals in the living room. Gregor's sister plays the violin to them after dinner, and Gregor, strangely drawn to the music and longing to regain his sister's attention, slowly crawls out once more, weak with starvation and covered with dirt. (The family has been neglecting to clean his room since his last "outburst"). Gregor's sister becomes hysterical and declares that Gregor must be gotten rid of. He crawls back into his room.

> He thought of his family with tenderness and love. The decision that he must disappear was one that he held to even more strongly than his sister, if that were possible. In this state of vacant and peaceful meditation he remained until the tower clock struck three in the morning. The broadening of light outside his widow entered his consciousness once more. Then his head sank to the floor of its own accord and from his nostrils came the last faint flicker of his breath.

Gregor is dead. The family's economic position, which had been unsteady since Gregor's metamorphosis, seems to improve over-night. His parents decide that it a time to find a husband for his sister.

The story is over. It has taken you through cringing revulsion, half-hearted laughter, aching pity. You wonder if you had not been misplaced in some sort of twilight zone for an hour. The only thing you are sure of is the taut ache straining in your shoulders and the realization that you must have made some sort of descent to wisdom. You are slowly recovering from the things that Kafka did not say. You find yourself suddenly interested in the man behind the words. You go to the library and you discover that he probably wrote the words out in long hand in a gas-lit room something like Gregor's. Franz Kafka, it seems, was a bachelor. He had a tyrannical father whom he feared and from whom he finally exiled himself. The consuming self-guilt that tortured Franz Kafka, it says, was evident in all that he wrote. You remember, suddenly, the apple lodged in Gregor's back. He was a lonely man who needed people, but also needed the isolation in which to write. And then all of a sudden you remember that day in the museum when you thought El Greco's distortions were great until the man standing next to you told you he had eye trouble. You read more of Kafka's stories, and although there lurks his father, and his isolation, and the misunderstanding of the people around him, you cannot forget the power of his words. You remember especially the first paragraph of one of his "Meditations:"

> I stand on the end platform of the tram and am completely unsure of my footing in this world, in this town, in my family. Not even casually could I indicate any claims that I might rightly advance in any direction. I have not any defense to offer for standing on this platform, holding on to this strap, letting myself be carried along by this tram not for the people who give way to the tram or walk quietly along or stand gazing into shop windows. Nobody asks me to put up a defense, indeed, but that is irrelevant.

A Nice Ride

Mary D. Hansberry, '69

That warm April morning, I decided to walk to the station, suitcase and all. My stoicism was slightly colored by the fact that the family car was hours gone and there wasn't any bus. And, as my suitcase was rather heavy — crammed with textbooks, notebooks and a few clothes I thought of it as a challenge, and I set off with a quick marching step, humming an appropriate marching song.

"Here we are at Valley Forge, we wouldn't be here if it weren't for George. Hup, two, three, four. Hup, two, three . . ." After a few hundred recitations of 'George", I changed my tune. "I left my wife at home in the kitchen with twenty-six children and one piece of gingerbread left, right, left, two, three, four." All of which got me a distance of about two and a driveway streets, and my right arm was creaking suspiciously. I plunked my suitcase on the sidewalk and sat on it.

I needed a plan of action, Hummm, maybe I could push it! My mind flashed a quick projection and I looked like one of those trained bears doing his favorite trick. Could I carry it in my arms? No again. I'm not superman. Maybe I should abandon it? I'll just slither away and not answer if it calls. But whoever found it would probably return all those Latin books anyway. And what about my French exam today? I need the old books for that.

I watched the morning traffic whizzing by. Whiz . . . whiz . . . maybe I should thumb a ride? Whiz . . . whiz . . . naw, with my luck I'd take a ride with grey-haired old lady who'd lecture me the whole ride on the terrible dangers of my situation, and how lucky I was that she, and not some murderer, had picked me up. Lucky, huh!

My horror at the thought of the old lady got me up and straining again. A red, white and blue mailman paraded past me.

"Pretty heavy load you have there!" His splotchy face was grinning. A friendly sort, I thought, too bad he isn't driving a car. My tempo was slacking with every step. Mind over matter, I thought, but I needed an incentive. I tried convincing myself that it was imperative that I get to the station because I had to meet a tall, blond, sun-burned skier who . . . but I couldn't fool myself, or my poor arm. I was aware that the books inside were being transformed by some magical process into pure lead, but I knew nobody would believe me if I told them, so I just kept taking my slow, painful steps.

Just about then the truck pulled up beside me, and stopped with a screech of brakes that rattled the engine, the frame, the cabin, and the rakes, lawnmowers and baskets in the back. The sound startled me and I dropped my suitcase on my baby toe.

Somebody in the truck was speaking to me, I could hear him, but my toe hurt like hell, and I didn't feel like answering.

"Scuzame Miss, exscuza me."

"Yes!" I growled.

"Ah, Miss? I wander coulda you tella me how you go to Lincoln Street?" It was some man yelling from a dusty, green pick-up truck. The truck was just like the one that Farmer Brown takes to town in any first grade reader.

I was still feeling obstinate, so I made him repeat his question a couple of times. I just happened to know where Lincoln Street was, something that usually didn't occur when anyone asked me directions, so I probably relayed the directions with some enthusiasm which the man-in-the truck most probably noticed.

He thanked me over and over, and only then seemed to catch sight of my big, heavy suit case.

"Hey, Miss. Where's you going with thata big, heavy suitcase?" "Just down to the train station." I could feel it coming. He was going to ask me if I wanted a ride.

"Hey Miss. I gotta go that way, no? If you donta mind this old truck too much, I give you a ride huh? Hey! You come look. You come

look inside, there's no dirt. What's say Miss?"

Now, I did want a ride. But, I did not want to ride in that truck! I really wanted a ride, and I didn't want to hurt his earthy, Italian pride, so, I climbed up into the contraption, positioned the suitcase on the seat between us, and slammed the door shut.

I turned to my hero, a tan muscular guy about thirty, with the biggest, whitest, toothiest grin. He was wearing old faded pants and an undershirt with the skinny straps like grandfathers wear on a hot, August night, with their beer cans, etc. His hair was shiny and black black, even the curly stuff on his chest, and I kinda liked him when I saw him in spite of myself.

Well, the way to the station was a straight course down Bright Street, and we were jangling over the bridge, when my driver suddenly veered right and took us down onto the turnpike below. My heart pounded violently.

"Excuse me sir, but you were supposed to go straight back there! This is the highway, sir. The big road leading north. We're going the wrong way. Just take the first exit on the right and we'll be back on the right road."

"Miss, what you saying, with all the noisy cars I can't hear you talk?" At that we zoomed past a Cadillac, an M.G., and the first exit.

I spoke much louder. "You've gone the wrong way and I've got to get back. I've got an important French test in an hour . . . Sir!" Another exit or two.

"Hey Miss. I'ma real sorry. I just mak'a mistake. I have'na been in America too long. Just a little mistake. Nice day for a ride though, Miss."

We were flying past exits like they didn't exist. I was almost frantic.

"Look, mister, I don't think this is at all funny, and if you don't turn at the next exit, I'm going to jump out of this truck!"

Well, he didn't pull in, and I didn't jump. I decided it wasn't worth the pain, and I hate bloody bodies on the highway, especially mine. But I kept up my screaming and I started waving my arms at the other cars. Nobody seemed to notice me except some little kids standing up in the back seat looking out their rear window, and they just waved back.

"Hey, you gotta nice red hair girl." He reached over and yanked the ends of my long hair.

Well this is it. I should have known it was coming. I've taken a ride with a homicidal sex maniac, just because I trust mankind and didn't want to hurt the poor guy's feelings. "Shut-up about my hair, and about what a beautiful day it is. I've got to get back. I've got to, I positively must . . ."

"Hey Miss. You gotta lots of stuff inside you. Like a firecracker you are!" He didn't seem to notice I had started crying so I started sobbing.

"Girl, don't cry. What's the matter, you no lik'a me?"

"You got that just right buddy. I like you no!" Maybe the man was deaf, we just kept right on rolling.

"And you got nice red hair, and today's a sunny day, just like in Italy and I'ma taking you for a nic'a long ride."

Kidnapped, raped and murdered, that's the way the papers would read. This was desperate. I had to think of something, we were already miles out of our way.

"Sir, if you wouldn't mind my asking too much, where exactly are we going on this ride?"

"Miss, if I told'a you once, I told'a you lot's times. We're going on a nice ride, so why don't you sit back and relax."

Well, I sat back, but my mind was far from relaxed. It was then that I noticed the thick gold ring on his finger.

"Mister, are you married?"

"Me? Oh yes Miss. I gotta wife and three kids."

"What're their names?"

"First there's Guido, then Ledia and Claudio."

"Mister, do you love your children?"

"Of course I lov'a my kids, even that crazy Guido."

"Well," my voice lowered with the awe-

someness of the question I was about to ask, "What would they think if they could see you right now?"

"He, he. That's real funny Miss. He, he, he, they would say nothing miss." Another victory for the opposition. "My wife and kids they still in Italy."

I folded my arms and cleared my throat. "Sir . . ."

"Yes, what you want now little miss?"

"I feel that I must inform you that my father is a policeman, and that he will never let you get away with this!"

"You talk's crazy girl, I don't know what you saying."

I was almost hysterical and my eyes kept scanning the front seat for something, anything. Wait. Over the mirror. A St. Christopher medal. Maybe . . .

He was talking to me again. "What's your name?"

"Angelina," I replied with only a slight smirk.

"Angelina? Oh my God! You crazy girl. Angelina with red hair? Okay, If you say so. And my name's Antonio. You call me Toni."

"Okay Toni, Just tell me one more thing. Are you a Catholic?"

"Mother of God, I pray to Jesus I'm a Catholic."

At last I'm on to something I thought. "Well, Toni, I'm a Catholic too, and that means we both have the same Pope, and you know, of course, where he lives."

"The blessed saint the Pope, he lives in Italy!"

"Okay, Toni, let's say I wrote a letter to that Pope in Rome, yours and mine, and I told him about what one of his own Italian Catholics was doing. As I said before, I don't want to go for a ride, and I have to get to school, and you probably should be somewhere too. What do you think he'd say?"

"I don't know miss. I don't know."

"Well, then I'll tell you. He could only be deeply ashamed, and would probably excommunicate you, and you know what that means, no Christian burial and eternal damnation."

"Hey, Miss. Don't say scary things like that." I liked that look on his face, it was just short of panic.

"Of course you'll have to leave America in disgrace, they'll ship you back to Italy."

Toni grew pale. "Hey, Angelina, next month my wife and kids coming over here to live. I got a little house already, and this truck, and a job with my cousins. They can't ship me back, they just can't!"

"Look, Toni, nobody will ship you back or even know about our ride if you just take me back to Boston. Here, turn off at this exit."

Toni wasn't smiling at all now. "I'm not a bad man, not evil or anything." He pulled out his wallet with his right hand, "Look here, look at my wife, pretty, huh? And the kids, nice strong healthy kids?"

I took his billfold in one shaky hand and held it open with the other shaky hand. There were three smiling women and at least twenty children in the picture, and I hadn't the slightest idea which was Toni's wife and family, but I was too emotionally exhausted to even ask.

"They're beautiful Toni, they look just like their father."

"Oh yeh? That's funny you say that, everybody else tells me they look just like their mother."

All I could say was that it was just one of those days, I'd probably flunk my French test too!

We had left the highway and were fast approaching one of the train stops.

"Stop here, Toni, I'll take this train into school."

The truck slammed to a stand-still and my head ached with the terrible shudder and the noise.

"Miss Angelina, will you shake my hand and say your not mad'a Toni? Will you please miss?" He looked so sorrowful, like a big naughty dog, so I grabbed his right hand and gave it a quick jerk and then bounded out the truck door.

"Hey, Angelina," he called after me, and I turned to see the familiar white grin, "Thank'a you very much girl for the nice ride."

Gratia

Is it God
who thus destroys me
feather by feather
when these wings subside
from hover,
from going over
intense hills and
meadows' drift
green with passion
white
with love?

Flight is delicious in me
to beat airs
swarming with sun's violence
to make steady
for the single height
where doldrum,
anger, song, dove,
danger merge
is glory,
man's far-lifting gale.
But fall is sober
fall is death.

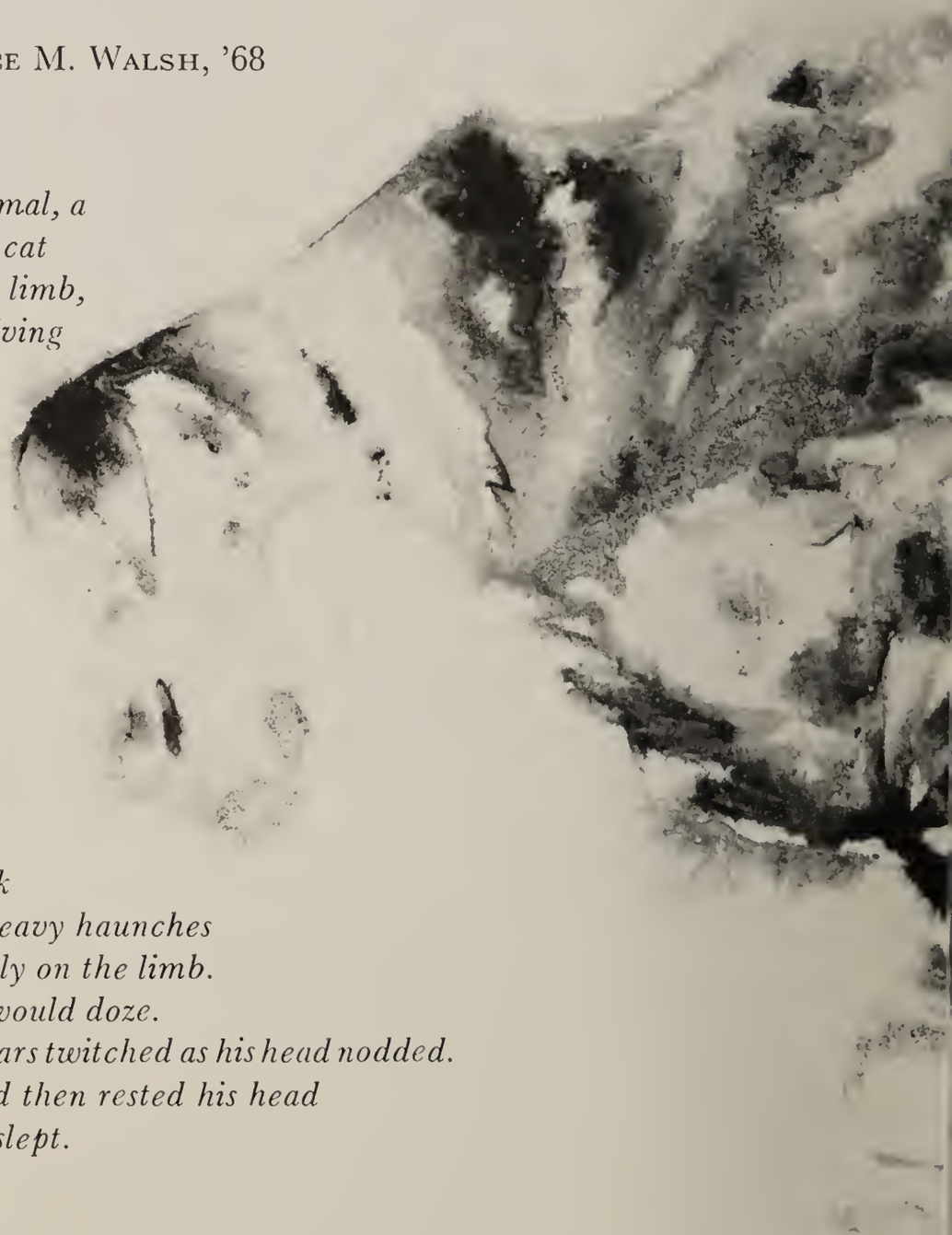
I am dropped
ragged,
shorn, distressed.
Little by little
the ears go deaf
the ringing goes
the bowl of fire tips
into drab
day's routine grays.
God's hands are
in this
on me.

He knows that
up
is
small
steps,
ten-toed, hard
where crowds clamor for
fishes
loaves
by some sprawled hill
on stones
— Say
Nazareth or Golgotha.

Mary Luti, '69

In the Jungle

Janice M. Walsh, '68



There was an animal, a
ferocious fearless cat
who sat on a tree limb,
breathless from living
an active life.
He was
all deed.
Thought
was just
an afterthought
with him.
His paw
uncurled
his claws
tightened
then relaxed.
He eased his back
and his smooth heavy haunches
settled comfortably on the limb.
In a moment he would doze.
His small, round ears twitched as his head nodded.
He looked around then rested his head
on his paws and slept.

Deidre O'Flaherty, '70

RAINER MARIA RILKE: SELF AND IMAGE

Diane Bonneau, '70

Torture and agony . . . the process of representing identity, his own or that of another, was the anguished vocation of the mythical Rilke. Restricted by the bounds of his humanity, Rainer Maria Rilke perhaps more than anybody else experienced the intense frustration of the limits of language, the inability of words to describe or circumscribe the reality of experience.

And *everything* was that which Rilke, the man, experienced. The warm illumination of a candle's flame, the rough texture of wood bark spoke as clearly of man's situation as human encounter.

His philosophy is totally existential — *now,* enveloped in the spatial limitations of *here,* constituted his identity and determined his choices:

> But because being here amounts to so much, because all this Here and Now, so fleeting, seems to require us and strangely concerns us. Us the most fleeting of all. Just once, everything, and only for once. Once and no more. And we too once. And never again. But this having been once, though only once, having been once on earth—can it ever be cancelled?

The importance of the moment — its uniqueness in time, its significance for the individual, finds constant expression in Rilke's verse. For him, *now* is the only reality, and his poetry is a reflection and affirmation of the *now* which he experiences as the process of life. His images are almost tangible; his emotion can almost be experienced by the reader. In a sense we can feel his isolation, his pain, and yet know that for him it could not have been any other way. He expressed the why of his existence as a desire to transcend time through pain:

> This is my strife: dedicate to desire through all days to roam. Then, strong and wide, with a thousand root-fibres deep into life to grip — and through pain far beyond life to ripen, far beyond time!

He is also fully aware that this can only be done through solitude, which in his youth seems to him a benefit of his vocation as poet. It is in this solitude that wonder and comprehension fill his spirit and cause him to exclaim:

> Thou my sacred solitude, thou art as rich and clean and wide as an awakening garden. My sacred solitude thou — hold shut the golden doors before which wishes wait.

Later, however, he sees this solitude as an isolation, an incommunicable loneliness which he finds impossible to overcome. He becomes so transcendent as to practically deny his humanity.

Rilke's vision of the poet and of the art is identical with his vision of himself. For him the true poet is both a man transformed and a transformer. And for Rilke, transformation is the essence of existence — "Staying is

nowhere, that which would stay what it is renounces existence." The self that lies beneath the surface self and reacts to external stimuli he sees as a constant flow of change. The self that is exhibited to others is but a mask, a necessary shield to protect his solitude.

Nietzsche once remarked that "every profound spirit needs a mask." It is this mask that is the "character" of the poet, the permanent, unchanging element of identity. This is the only self that can be planned, the only response to the future. When Rilke was asked about himself, he referred people to "that figure which I am building beyond myself, outside, more valid and more permanent . . . For who knows who I am? I am constantly changing."

The intense solitude and depth of communication with nature that was Rilke's being caused him to take on this "mask." In a sense, it shielded the part of him that was part of nature. This transition of self to nature was for Rilke the primal experience. His essence required him to be transformed into element and through this element, to somehow communicate his transformation:

> Earth, isn't this what you want; an invisible / re-arising in us? Is not your dream / to be one day invisible? Earth! Invisible! / What is your urgent command if not transformation? / Earth, you darling, I will! Oh! believe me, you need / your Springs no longer to win me: a single one, / just one, is already more than blood can endure. / I've now been unspeakably yours for ages and ages. / You were always right, and your holiest inspirations / Death, that friendly Death. / Look, I am living. On what? Neither childhood nor future / are growing less . . . Supernumerous existence / wells up in my heart.

In his earlier poems and in "The Book of Pictures," he often expresses a youthful joy at his absorption into universal nature. He describes a tree, and in his vision of it we sense pulsating exhiliration, can feel his breathlessness. With the aid of the metaphor of the word ripening in silence, we can ever so briefly grasp the isolation of a moment — the sense of his experience. And then we feel it almost peel from us — a train has disappeared over the horizon which still holds our gaze and "tenderly your eyes let it go."

> With your eyes, which wearily scarce from the much worn threshhold freethemselves / you lift quite slowly a black tree and place it against the sky: slender, alone. / And you have made the world. And it is large / and like a word that yet in silence ripens. And as your will takes in the sense of it, tenderly your eyes let it go . . .

The "much worn threshold" is the image of daily mediocrity through which the poet attempts to "make the world." He can do it because he is separate and alone, and because he has vision.

As he continued with his expression of this transformation, however, he experienced increasing frustration. The more he poured his identity into his work, the more his ego became dissolved by the etchings of his pen's ink, the more deeply he realized that he was losing his "selfness" and becoming mere "relatedness," identical with an object and thereby without a personal standpoint. He became, in his own words, a "mouthpiece for Dionysus, the name for the transforming power which forces men to become masks, masks of a suprapersonal divine being."

For this reason, the mask is a recurrent theme in Rilke's writing. The mask is an instrument which both conceals and reveals. It also symbolizes the transformation of the wearer, the poet or his reader. A highly subjective example of Rilke's use of the mask theme is taken from the poem "The Death of the Poet:"

> O yes, his face was this remotest distance that seeks him still and woos him in despair; and his mere mask, timidly dying there, is tender and open now like the consistence of an empty fruit corrupting in the air.

Here Rilke expresses his belief that it is the mask we have created for ourselves which dies at the death of our bodies. Our true "face," constantly changing and protected by the outer sham is, in a sense, our soul, partaking of eternity and infinity, "this remote-set distance."

The mirror is another device which Rilke employs often. Faces translated in mirrors represented the higher allegorical level of man's transformation. Rilke is continually fascinated with images in mirrors. He does

not consider the person on the outside to equal the image reflected on the surface of the glass. A transformation occurs in the process, the mirror reflecting the self beyond the image of the mask.

For Rilke, words were both mirrors and masks. They were his instruments of transformation. Rilke turned his whole life into poetry and met with continual frustration in the process. He became trapped midway between self-surrender and self-absorption, neither completely transformed to suprapersonal power, nor completely himself reflecting Later, however, he sees this solitude as an personal subjectivity. He sought to fashion a work of art out of his own fate, and thus escaped the total insanity of an unrealized identity. Continually he sought verbal equivalents to the images of his soul: hence the language innovations and substantized verb forms that are purely Rilkean. He discovered, however, that even breaking all the rules, there was still a problem in communicating his images via the media of language. In the end he despaired of communication entirely and wrote solely for himself. For some, this was an admission of his inadequacy as an artist. But while his meanings became ambiguous and his message misinterpreted, his writing was, in itself, his salvation. It recorded all the anxieties and tension that would otherwise have driven him mad.

Very much of what we know of Rilke's personal philosophy comes from a series of letters which he addressed to Mr. Kappus, an aspiring poet and a very dear friend of his. In these letters we find his thoughts on sadness and solitude:

> Were it possible for us to see further than our knowledge reaches, and yet a little way beyond the outworks of our divining, perhaps we would endure our sadnesses with greater confidences than our joys. For they are the moments when something new has entered us, something unknown; our feelings grow mute in shy perplexity, everything in us withdraws, a stillness comes, and the new, which no one knows, stands in the midst of it and is silent.

Here for the first time we can glimpse a relaxed and soothing quality in his words, a ray of consolation is his message. It is in our moments of sadness, Rilke says, that the future enters into us. And so we are content to remain still and attentive during these times because we realize that this is the process of life itself, stripped of external noises — the rapid pulsations of a split-second consciousness of time — and our somewhat mediocre position in the world, always, it seems, "with respect to." As Einstein changed the concepts of motion with the laws of relativity, Rilke traces the motion of consciousness as a process of going forth from within ourselves, continual, and relative.

Rilke believes that we are, in essence, solitary. Although we may delude ourselves to believe otherwise, it is better if we accept it, even as he said, "to begin by assuming it." If we experience pain and dizzying sickness as a result of this acceptance, this, too, is good. For it is part of our experience. "And we must experience pain and dizzying sickness as broadly as possible." Our moments of solitude and sadness are moments of change when the future transforms itself within us.

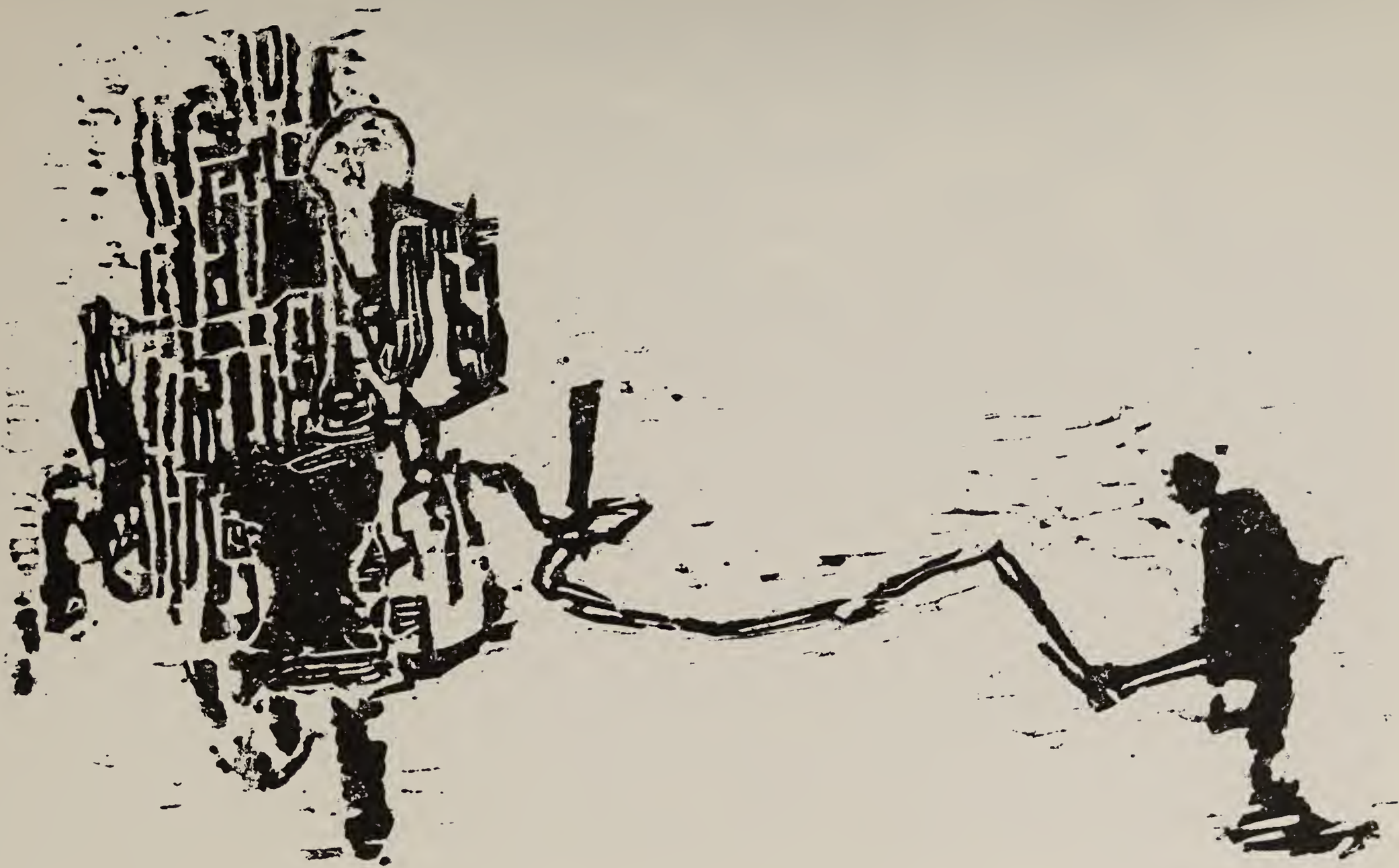
Rilke's poetry is a total reflection of his philosophy. For him, it could not have been any other way. Self-expression was his means of avoiding total self-destruction. In reading Rilke's poetry we feel, we sense. It requires examination by our emotions rather than our intellect; for our intellect is steeped in limitations, while the images of our emotions are without bounds, transcending time and personality. For how else could we hope to begin to understand that "silver heaven between dream and day" that is Rilke's poetry?

Nancy Cornaglia, '69

Diane Zalewski, '69

Janice Walsh, '68

CORNAGLIA



ZALEWSKI

WALSH

ZALEWSKI

ZALEWSKI

The Way It Was

Claire Kearney, '69

I was lying on my bed the other night looking out the window at the sky which is about all you can see at that angle as my room is on the twenty-first floor. You see, it's a big school, a mega-multiversity or whatever the latest term is. Well anyway, I was looking at the sky which was really very nice about that time, all splotches of dark blue and pink. I guess it must have been around six o'clock. The days were getting longer; not that it made a lot of difference or that anyone took much notice, but they were. I was thinking about myself, which is my big subject of thought whenever I do any voluntary thinking. But I suppose that's natural. I was trying to figure out if I had changed much since I came here. Well all these pictures of "me-in-the-past" were going through my mind like slides in a projector and I was viewing them and making comments to myself. One picture stuck in my mind for a while. I was swimming at night in a still pond with a boy.

It was two summers ago at the Cape. I was working for a paltry sum as a chambermaid in one of the hundreds of motels which grace the place and paying twelve dollars a week to stay in a room with two other girls on the second floor of this typical old New England house. I was there for basically two reasons. They had to do with independence and having fun. You see, I come from a small town and had kind of drifted apart from my high-school friends so I didn't want to spend the summer back home dying of boredom which is what you do if you don't have a boyfriend to take you to the beach or the show on weekends. I wanted adventure. So my parents, who are pretty liberal, agreed to let me spend the summer at the Cape.

Well this particular incident which popped into my mind happened about the beginning of August. Gail and I were lying on our beds after supper taking our daily nap. We had this routine, you see. We'd get out of work at about 2:30 or 3:00, go down to the beach and try to catch the rays for a while, then go back to the house and eat supper. Supper usually consisted of canned hash or hamburgers or spaghetti of some kind. Gail was Italian and she knew all the different sizes and shapes of noodles, so at least we had variety. A couple of times we had sloppy-joe mix which Gail found in a big wire basket in the First National marked "Damaged Merchandise — ½ price." The stuff inside was o.k., though. It was just the can that was bent. Well anyway, after supper we would sleep for a couple of hours. It's hard work being a chambermaid, you know. Some people can really mess up rooms in a night. I didn't really mind too much when they filled the bathtub with ice and stuck their beer in, but when they let the kids keep jelly fish and mussels and stuff in them, that was a bit hard to face. Well, there are a lot of other grievances involved in being a chambermaid, but never mind.

This particular night Gail yawned and rolled over on the squeaky ancient mattress and said, "Hey, El-len. What do you wanna do tonight?" This question was almost as typical as the rest of the routine. You see, at the Cape it's not like you have a planned social calendar or anything. Things just happen sort of informally and at the spur of the moment, when they happen. You see, lately things hadn't been happening very well. Matter of fact, I was a little lonely.

I stretched and yawned in my usual Tarzan jungle call way and said, "I don't know. Wanna go over to Allen and Dickie's?"

Allen and Dickie were guys who we had gotten friendly with. Allen was a waiter at the hotel where Gail worked and through

him we got to know Dickie who was a cook at the Pancake Man and their other roommate Arthur who worked in a shoe store. They all were Jewish and all from Virginia. We looked on them as sort of big brothers because they were a couple of years older and talked like they were more experienced and worldly.

Gail thought for a minute then said, "Yeah. Lets go over, maybe Dickie will give us a free steak."

So we got up and put on our usual outfits — tight, off-white levis, loafers, and big, bulky pullovers. Then we each took a turn in the bathroom applying eye liner and mascara and combing our hair. After about half an hour we were ready to go see our "friends."

Cape nights are very nice. They're much different from inland nights. There's always a soft clean breeze and a certain smell in the air that tells you the ocean is nearby. You can hear the soft waves rolling and you imagine the deserted beach and stillness of it all.

All of a sudden a white convertible zoomed past us then screeched to a halt. "Hey, Gayel." It was Laura and company. Laura was one of the chambermaids who worked with Gail. She was only seventeen but she drank and went to parties and everything and so didn't her friends. I guess Gail and I grew up kind of slowly. The car backed up and they opened the door to let us in. Laura was sitting in the back seat with a can of beer in her hands. "Do you kids wanna go to a party?"

I told you that's the way things happen at the Cape. Spur of the moment. Now Gail and I never were ones to pass up invitations to parties. As I said before, we were out to have fun. Not that the parties were always fun. Sometimes the guys were ugly or creepy or fast but you had to expect that and just make out the best you could. Anyway it was something to do. It turned out we were going over to Laura's brother's who rented a cottage with some other guys and they had other friends over there.

The cottage was at the end of a dead-end road which led into the woods. Well we all charged in and Laura being the only one who knew anybody began making conversation. Then there was that awkward time like there is at any party when the girls just sit there and talk to the girls and the boys just sit there and talk to the boys except they have beer in their hands and talk a little louder. Then one by one each boy will spot a girl who he thinks is kind of cute and maybe he'd like to get to know her. So he'll saunter over to her and say nonchalantly, "Hi!" And the girl will smile and say, "Hi!" Then comes the usual barrage of questions. They're so predictable you could block your ears and answer at fifteen second intervals if you were the girl. You know. "What's your name? Where are you from? Where are you working? Where do you go to school?" After the revelation of critical biographical information comes "Do you know . . . blah, blah, blah, Oh yeah, he's a great kid etcetera."

Well gradually the two sexes mingle and the voices get louder and the noise of pop-tops popping off becomes more frequent and the party is under way. To tell you the truth, I wasn't faring too well that night. This pudgy, dirty blonde haired boy a couple of chairs to my left had gotten as far as "where do you come from?" I was definitely not interested. Not that I expect everyone to be a knock-out but I could just tell he was a kind of simple jello type and I didn't want to be tied up for the rest of the night with him. So every time he would ask me a question I would answer curtly then turn my head to the right and pretend I was deeply engrossed in the conversation of the people beside me. After a while I saw that the pairing up was gaining momentum. Things didn't look too good for me. Fearing that I would be stuck with old Pudgy, I went out to the kitchen and sat down next to the refrigerator.

Any time I'm at a party and having a lousy time I decide that this is a golden opportunity to "observe human nature." So I sat down by the refrigerator and watched kids come and take beer out. Nobody paid too much attention to me. The place was so crowded.

"What are you doing there?" His voice was deep. He was tall with black hair and glasses. Intellectual looking but handsome.

"Watching you," I replied carelessly.

"Why are you alone?" he asked.

I didn't answer.

"Here. Hold this thing to catch the ice. He was banging a block of ice against the door of the freezer trying to break it into smaller pieces.

I held the tray for him. He scooped up the ice, put it in his glass, poured some whisky out of a bottle, then took a gulp. He was really very handsome and very friendly. He didn't ask me all those dumb questions either. We talked about different things. You know. From little things to "matter of life importance." I don't know why. Most conversations I have with kids I know are pretty ordinary. But with strangers I'm different. He was from somewhere in the mid-west and went to school somewhere in the East. His name was Michael and he fascinated me.

I can't really remember very well what he said. Actually he did most of the taking. You see I was kind of shy then. But I remember that he was very serious when he talked. He looked right at me and spoke very low and deliberately. Other boys when they're talking to a girl act like they're trying to use up time or something. You know. They look around the room or when one of their friends goes by, they slap him on the back and say, "Hey! How ya doin, old man?" Or else they talk about the last big drunk they put on and what a good time they had and how smashed they were etcetera. I'm not an old prude or anything. But really that sort of stuff doesn't interest me too much. Not that I think it's bad. It just seems kind of silly to sit and talk to a person and not say anything. You know what I mean?

After about an hour Michael put down his glass and said, "Do you want to go for a walk, Ellen?"

I'm not completely naive, you know. Every level headed respectable eighteen year old girl knows that when a boy whom you've just met at a party says that, you should expect a violent attack in the woods. But for some reason I wasn't suspicious of Michael. He had been talking to me just like to another person and the fact that I was a girl really didn't seem to have much to do with it. "O.K.," I said.

We walked out the back door and the screen slammed shut. It was a very nice night out — cool and quiet except for the cricket sounds or an occasional car going by on the main road. It took a little while for my ears to get used to the stillness. As we moved away from the cottage, the noise inside mellowed and the voices and light sort of mingled together. I walked along the road with him in my bare feet listening to his low intense voice. A soft breeze was blowing through the dark pines. It brushed my hair back from my face and somehow I felt very young and very glad to be there.

"Where are we going, Michael?" I asked. Really I didn't even care. Everything was so peaceful I just wanted to keep walking forever.

"To the pond," he said. "There's a small pond at the end of this road. We take a bath in it every night after work."

"Oh," I said, and we shuffled on.

I cannot really tell you how the pond looked but it was beautiful. We stood on the damp sand and just looked at it not speaking at all. There is something about being near water at night. It was very calm. The moon was full and very clear. It shimmered on the ripples washing against the shore. I slowly turned my head to trace its perimeter. The woods surrounding the water were dark against the paler sky.

"It seems like we're the only two people in the world," I said.

Michael laughed quietly.

We stood there in silence for a long moment looking at the water. Suddenly he turned to me and said, "Do you want to go for a swim?"

It caught me by surprise. "With our clothes on?" I asked incredulously.

"Sure, why not?"

I had never done anything like that before. I mean I'm not one of those whacked-out types who does all sorts of crazy things. All of a sudden, I don't why, I had a burst of courage. "O.K. Why not?" I said.

I took off my sweatshirt and he took off his

glasses and we laid them in a pile on the beach and walked toward the edge of the pond. The water was lovely and cool and felt good on my bare feet. We hesitated there on the edge.

"You've got to jump right in you know or else you'll be cold." Michael said. With that he dived in, swam underwater for about twenty yards then popped up. "Come on in, Ellen. It's beautiful."

I looked down at the water, sucked in my breath, and then dived under. I surfaced about twenty feet from, shivering and twisting about trying to get used to it.

Michael swam over to me. "Isn't it nice?" he smiled at me.

"Yes, beautiful," I said.

We were out about a hundred yards out only a little bit over our heads and treading water. Everything was very still except for the quick little splashes we made when we turned our bodies. The moon lit up the water like a soft glow of gaslight. I turned to the shore and saw the dark pile which was my sweatshirt and his glasses sitting on the beach. I remember thinking how nice to be quiet like this.

"Hey! do you want to race?" He grinned at me.

"Sure," I said. "But I'll have to have a head start."

"O.K. Take as big a one as you want to."

We swam back to the shallow water only I stopped about twenty yards ahead of him. It was a ridiculously large headstart. I would beat him for sure.

"You say 'go,'" he called ahead of me.

"O.K.," I said, taking a deep breath. "One . . . Two . . . Three . . . Goooo"

I did a shallow dive into the water and began stroking madly toward the middle of the pond. I'm not one of those girls who lets the boy win. I really wanted to beat him. In less than a minute I knew he was passing me. I could hear his body moving under the water and the splash of his hands as they slapped the surface. I tried to keep up but it was no use. So finally I stopped swimming and lifted my face out of the water. In a little while he stopped too. I pouted and groaned with pretended disgust.

He laughed. "I won," he said.

"So what," I replied, And stood there with the water up to my chin still pouting.

He slowly swam over and stood there facing me. "Don't be mad, Ellen," he said softly. "I would have let you win."

I looked up at him. "Sure," I said. And then he was kissing me. I saw the pale sky and the outline of the pines and the full moon shining right down on our faces. The water and the night were extremely quiet and I knew it was all unreal. I was afraid.

"Let me go," I said.

He pulled away quickly and I swam to shore and trudged up onto the beach. I leaned over and picked up my sweatshirt, dropping his glasses in the sand. With deliberate and exaggerated movements I pulled it over my head. Then I turned to the water. It was too dark and I was far away to see him. "Are you going to come back now?" I called into the darkness.

He made no answer but I heard the muffled splashing sounds come closer and closer to the shore. He walked toward me, his bermudas dripping wet and his hair plastered close to his head. He leaned over and picked up his glasses.

"I guess we should go back to the party," he said staring at the sand.

"Good idea," I said.

So we walked back in silence and when we reached the cottage the party was breaking up. Gail said she had been looking for me.

When we were leaving, I turned to him and said very nonchalantly, "See ya."

He smiled a little. "Yeah."

The next day at work I remember how tired I was and how I kept thinking about the preceding night as I was going around making the beds. It really had me stumped. I thought I must have been crazy. Who would ever go for a little swim at midnight with their clothes on under a full moon? And with a complete stranger. I don't know. I'm not even sure what it all means now. Maybe nothing. But anyway that's the way it was. And it just stuck in my memory.

Five

Elaine Carroll, '68

1.

Last time I took a long in-breathing
life smelled
not air-pollution
not cabbage and turnips parboiled
not lilacs in early rain
life smelled
not low-tide-pools, not starch
not "Woodsy Pine" sprayed heavy
and unconvincing.
Last time I took a long in-breathing
life smelled
lavender —
mostly musty.

2.

Let me listen the world for awhile
deep in a sea-scrolled shell —
infamous "Chambered Nautilus"
rewinding its salt-crust song.
Close on my ear I cup it,
farther and farther still
strain
till its caverns blare trumpets
till sirenings shatter me silent
and horses' hooves thunder me deaf,
farther and farther still,
past the echoing
till nothing remains
but the still-ness
of lifelines
uncoiling in air.
Farther and farther
still.

3.

"I see," said the blind man
as he walked into the wall
and I, the gimlet-eyed,
laughed myself salty.
"I see," said the blind man,
"that beamwood stretches
broader than it ought —
or than my tight-marked boundaries allow —
and doorways which I carved
were carven not at all.
I see," said the blind man,
"that laughter steeps itself
in honey
and in gall
and quickens out
into a golden tickle
or slowly pours
like salting on a wound
and I see that you are weeping
in the jade deep of yourself
as, hollow-eyed, you watch
and watch
with owlish thoughtfulness."
And I, the gimlet-eyed,
caught myself back from hooting.
"I see,"
said the blind man
and walked into the wall.

4.

Morning was mine for the tasting
callow with cockcrow and dew
and you bore it more carefully
each time you came,
again and again and again.
You gathered up peaches and apples
and brought me an armful a day —
to sunspark my tongue unto tender
to fill me with dazzle and grace.
But I smiled my wisdom smile —
I licked it eggshell smooth —
and took to myself only stones.
For then I lay deep in untasting
and would not understand
that in your ample self
life grew
to a fine, fine flavor.

5.

"Our Lady, Star of the Sea"
sits on a stack of unwritten poems
and serves in humility —
a paperweight,
flat-pressed and hard,
pounded into five dull points
and one ungraceful virgin,
all-uneven surface
like chewed nickels.
But when I rub it,
coarse upon my thumb,
Stella Maris speaks
that even rough ways
have their smoothness.

SYNAPSE

Dr. Rosemary Ruether is Professor of Religion at Howard University and author of *The Church Against Itself,* published this year by Herder and Herder. Her recent article "The Becoming of Women in Church and Society" (*Cross Currents,* Fall, 1967) reflects a "psychoanalytic consciousness" of history and promises to give new leverage and new dimension to the cause of women's rights and civil rights. *The Second Sex,* by Simone de Beauvoir, discusses woman's cultural position, and was published in 1953.

According to Jungian psychology, the ego is only a part of the total self, having emerged from, and separated itself out of, the subconscious. However, once it has achieved its moral and rational position, the ego remains antagonized and threatened by the dark forces of the lower self, the beast in the belly, as it were, and must constantly assert itself over against it.

This struggle is figured in two ways, according to Jung — the "shadow" and the sexual other. The first is a projection of the lower self, the unbecoming self, the "shadow" onto the body, which leads to the traditional dualism of man's soul and body. However fallacious this projection may be, it provides a convenient form for the "alien side" of the psyche to take. That is, the body becomes the antagonist. Thus there arises, according to Ruether, 'that strangely pejorative connotation of the body which Christian man has yet fully to overcome."

In Jung's analysis, the second manifestation of the unconscious is in the form of the sexual other — everyone has in his own soul his sexual counterpart (animus or anima) in which he typifies his own other self. Then his contra-sexual *image* is projected upon the *actual* sexual other, but as long as this image represents the irrational and emotive self (the animus or anima is merely the rejected, immature part of one's own sexual being), it becomes impossible to see the sexual other as a whole person. "For this reason our cultural images of male and female do not represent whole persons, integrated selves, but they represent stereotypes."

Why has woman not rebelled against the social, economic and psychically damaging injustices of her culture? A Marxian analysis tells us that she is so well dispersed in our society that she has not been able to form a self-conscious interest group. But the real, more troubling cause is that women do not *want* to be liberated. The life of a pretty *thing* has its rewards — or has been made to seem so. A parasitic existence on man's economic back is secure, at least, and the lot of the happy housewife or helpless beauty has been made as attractive as the lot of the happy, carefree, soul-singing, watermelon-eating Negro. Both myths, as Beauvoir believes, are ground into our concepts of self by a class who has much to gain from the exploitation of these groups.

It has been suggested that the exploiter in woman's case is the male. But why? And how has woman fallen so completely prey to the trap as using her entire person to service man's expectations?

A historical materialist analysis, more particularly Frederich Engels, would explain it in terms of economic relations. In pre-history the sexes had to assume an equal burden of labor to provide a sustenance level for existence. As work techniques improved, men could handle the "transformation of nature" by themselves. Women, as a result, were given the home, lost their economic necessity, became preparers of food and producers of babies. Losing the burden of work was not an unmixed blessing. In losing a creative transforming relationship with nature (the Marxian interpretation of work) women lost their rights to economic — hence social and political — action and independence. "Men have presumed to create a feminine domain — the kingdom of life, of imminence — only in order to lock up women therein. What they demand today is to be recognized as existents by the same right as men and not to subordinate existence to life, the human being to its animality."

De Beauvoir, however, judges this economic explanation fragmentary. And reduced to simplistic terms — that women need only get a job to be a free person — she is correct. Factories do not offer freedom. The working class woman who is *forced* to sell her labor would gladly give up her job. It is the middle class woman who wants to work, and then for more than financial reasons. However, if we look at the societies in which woman's place has been improved most dramatically, Engels may be very correct. I am thinking of a revolutionary situation such as North Viet Nam. Here women are needed. Because of the forced crisis level life-style she must organize, fight and build with man. They are brothers in a common cause. The same phenomenon occured in Russia after the revolution, and to some extent in countries like Cuba.

In the more usual non-revolutionary social situation, men have the leisure to engage in the creation of myths about women. In addition to woman caged as an economic slave in the home, she is also, thanks to man, psychic slave to aspects of "The Eternal Feminine." De Beauvoir's highly original analysis of the usefulness of this mythical mysterious woman is done in existential terms. It is the existence of other men that tears each man out of his imminence — his stolid being — there impacted in himself and nature's "things." Real friendship and generosity alone permit the recognition of other free beings, of other conscious selves. But contending with another free subject is very difficult because it increases one's own responsibility to be authentic in turn, something man would escape if he could. But if he escapes from man, there is only silent nature to address. Solution to problem: buy a dog, a cat, or get a woman. Woman is the wished-for intermediary, says de Beauvoir. She is easily dominated and undemanding, because man has glorified her passivity and attempts to please him, yet much more talkative and ego-satisfying than silent nature.

The problem here, which de Beauvoir does not expressly address herself to, is the effects of a "love relationship" of this quality on man's relationship to the rest of humanity. When his adult love experience is not with an equal on her own terms, but with a mythical projection of his own needs, he fails to learn what recognition and love of another real self means. And as long as his wife is somehow less than fully human, she will never be defined as worthy of him or of his total unreserved human love. This might explain why our modern ideas of love are so very weak, situational and condescending.

Ruether suggests that this strategy by which the ego localizes its antagonist (the rest of the larger psyche) in the body and the opposite sex is parallel to the process involved in the rise of mankind's consciousness. That is, in the preconscious primitive state, we find a period of sexual integration — equality in the burden of labor, equality in mythical figures of the Divinity, and so forth — a kind of primitive innocence before the rise of the dualism of dominance and subjection.

However, in the transition to classical civilization, this disintegrates and woman becomes the chattel of the male.

Marx suggests that with the disintegration of primitive communism and the advent of private property, the whole structure of society was transformed into a relationship of possessor and chattel, of master and serf.

The subjection of woman and the rise of slavery are both phases of a critical historical phenomenon — the rise of a small elite aristocracy, who procure the wealth and leisure time to create civilized culture at the expense of the masses.

Thus the historical rise of a new level of man's consciousness (the thinking elite) creates a dualism in society, just as the emergence of the ego caused a dualism of the self. The ego of the race, as it were, wins through to its own identity first by projecting its shadow self and its contra-sexual image upon the other.

The shadow of the lower self, the emotional and irrational side of man, is projected on the masses. It becomes impossible to see a member of the lower classes as a potential person — he is totally submerged in mankind's psychic identification of him with the lower self.

Similarly, the woman takes on the character of the contra-sexual image of the fickle, carnal, threatening self. "Woman becomes veiled and secluded, put out of public places, confined to the physical and mental bedroom of the culture."

A further consequence of these projections by the culture-bearing male elite is that the woman and the masses become conditioned to these subjugated roles. The slave actually adopts the character projected on him by the elites, the woman actually shapes herself into the role projected for her by the man. And this self-fulfilling prophecy is reinforced by the myths which arise about "fixed characters." Ruether notes that "we are not dealing with any real question of fixed natures, although misunderstanding on this point has paralyzed discussion of both the rights of woman and the rights of the common man." It is of primary importance for us to realize that "all of the dualisms and antagonisms which were projected on the roles of society are in fact the dualisms of the human self as a whole."

In our present cultural historical stage, Ruether hopes, we are "coming of age," that is, moving out of the dualistic fantasy-making stage and witnessing the rise of the mature whole self. This is parallel to the process which Jung calls "individuation" — the ego integrates itself with its subconscious and no longer lives on antagonisms and projections.

The visible effort to overcome the psychic split of society can be seen today in the rise of socialism — the striving for a new communal, cooperative state of man in which those groups once "forced into the roles of the lower psychic self for the sake of the establishment of the rational ego are now rising to demand their share of full personhood."

If this is to be a true maturation, Ruether says:

> The Western man must discover that the beast in the belly that he projected on the Negro is none other than the beast in his own belly. He must discover that the emotive, affective nature he projected on the woman is none other than his own emotive nature which he needs to integrate with the rational *logos* in order to arrive at integrated personhood. The fragmented parts revolt from the myth of fixed natures and states of being and come into a new encounter with each other. From encounter they must rise to a real dialogue and then, hopefully, to a new integrated communal humanity.

MARY WHALEN, '69

Ah, young women, when will you be our brothers, our brothers in intimacy without ulterior thought of exploitation? When shall we clasp hands truly?

Most women are in a false existential condition. The reason woman does not act in good faith, Simone de Beauvoir contends in *The Second Sex,* is that she cannot act as a free being, transcending and creating herself, while she is defined only as *Other* in relation to a male *Self.* Throughout history she had assumed a less than human ("less than man") identity, limiting her self-concept by the terms of the myth man had created for her. Women are starting to realize, however, that any type of "feminine mystique" serves the same function as the fiction of the "Negro soul." In both cases the delights of passivity and servility, the joys of being childlike, are glorified — in whose interest?

The Church has done much to preserve this situation. True, the early Church preached salvation for men and women, but only if they become a-sexual beings. Whenever churchmen approached the sexual reality of adult man and woman they turned coward and denied woman her sexuality as a Christian (this may be the reason for the emphasis on becoming childlike). Sexuality has been dissociated from ideal human experience as reflected in St. Augustine's horror at being born "inter faeces et urinam." De Beauvoir also notes that "the aversion of Christianity in the matter of the feminine body is such that while it is willing to doom its God to an ignominious death, it spares him the defilement of being born." Incidentally, she writes that the supreme masculine victory is consummated in the cult of the Virgin." "For the first time in history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority."

The second volume of the book examines the thesis set forth in the first volume, "Fact and Myth," in terms of the "Woman's Life Today." The entire feminine socialization process is covered in chapters from childhood to marriage. De Beauvoir then examines different types of women — the lesbian, prostitute, mystic, narcissist, and the woman in love. This semi-autobiographical study of the formation of woman's situation and character draws on experience from Simone de Beauvoir's French upbringing, but it raises many things to a level of consciousness that are essential to American woman's understanding and transforming of herself today.

Childhood is a period in which the little girl learns to make herself a pretty object, like her doll. This theme occurs over and over throughout her life: to *be* in a state and to *wait* for approval, rather than to actively do and initiate. Religion, especially Catholicism, encourages the young girl to *surrender*. To be happy, she must be loved, to be loved she must await love's coming. For this reason it becomes the supreme necessity to charm a male. To trap and appeal to the expected lover becomes the vocation impressed upon the young girl by her culture.

As she becomes older, the young girl increasingly looks to this vague "Love" for fulfillment and escape. The adolescent girl frequently spends her time in the cult of the self-diary and a mystical love of nature. Often she will love an older woman (who will not violate her), or a friend in a mutual narcissism, or choose an unattainable man to whom all dreams are directed. These are ways of avoiding the shocking reality of sexual initiation while lingering narcissistically in an undefined fog waiting, waiting, for an all-fulfilling "Love." "She has no real will but only shifting desires." She wants everything and thinks perhaps that she can do everything because nothing depends on her. She is never asked or allowed to come out of herself in an action that could result in a concrete definition and evaluation of her being.

Throughout the book a distinction is developed between woman *being* and man *doing*. This is a useful tool in examining whether de Beauvoir's thesis applies to our own lives. And it would be very naive and even uncourageous not to ask serious questions of ourselves. Will we choose to live our lives with another free person ("doing") or do we say we "want to be *married,*" i.e. to carry out feminine functions in this generality ("being")? Making a decision to teach people or to change social conditions is quite different from wanting "to be a schoolteacher or a social worker" in the sense of planning to be in a certain role or state in relation to an anticipated marriage state for which a man is still wanting.

Correlatively, these girls are reluctant to undertake disciplined, independent thinking in their academic field. They direct most of their emotional energy toward creating a fantasy that the Boy will come to finally give meaning to this life of waiting. Instead of taking her existence into her own hands and deciding who she is, what her real concerns are, and how best to live accordingly, female students often try to prepare themselves with a diploma for a life style that will compliment a male's life style. Optimistic dreams of being great are transfigured into a belief that "I will at least help some great man with his work."

(De Beauvoir reminds us that the man gets his name on the book cover; his hard working helper gets the dedication.) Undefined girls dreaming unreal hopes are then disappointed when the new catch does not transform their lives. Often girls engage in fantasylike romantic actions with new male acquaintances to play out the romance she has psychically lived.

The alternative to this debilitating condition that our socialization so encourages involves the risk of each woman standing alone and taking responsibility for her own being and doing. It means making life decisions, not in terms of fabricated myths, stereotypes and false needs, but as an authentic man.

In her final chapter, De Beauvoir suggests some preconditions for liberation. The first is a gainful employment: "Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator." Woman's curse has been that as a result of the passive mystery feminine myth she has not been permitted to do anything and could only glorify her imminence cage by narcissicism, being in love, or religion. Only when she is active and productive can she regain her transcendency and actually see herself in the world. The second important step to freedom involves men. Husbands and boyfriends can teach women to make their own decisions, defend their own convictions, and live their own lives with integrity. And a very tactic in this struggle to hew woman out of a tangle of myth and the vagueness of her entire "feminine" condition is reading *The Second Sex*. De Beauvoir brings the history, implications, and mechanisms of "feminity" to a level of consciousness for woman. Only then is change possible.

"When will we become brothers?" The response is frequently do we *want* to be brothers? Won't life lose its mystery and passion without perfume, intrigue, and the cult of the feminine. That response shows the depth of the problem. De Beauvoir answers, "On the contrary, when we abolish the slavery of half of humanity, together with the whole system of hypocrisy it implies, then the 'division' of humanity will reveal its genuine significance and the human couple will find its true form." She quotes Marx: "The direct, natural, necessary relation of human creatures is the relation of *man to woman*." We *must* become brothers. "To gain the supreme victory of the reign of liberty in the world it is necessary that by and through their natural differentiation men and women unequivocally affirm their brotherhood."

Barbara Deck, '69

Spring

me lord again . . .
wondering
wander lost
bowed, reflective living
green,
edging water.
spring me into
night-wet yesterday
silvering in lightness
a rising Christ-ened spray
and spring me up
in geyser-thrusted hope
the choice becoming crystal
and spring
oh spring me with your
near pool quiet
lord
again
and hold
and keep
and still
me
spring.

Sister Helen Sean, SND '69